Canadian Centre
For Foreign Policy
Development

Centre canadien
pour le développement
de la politique étrangère

8010,1 E

REPORT FROM THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE AMERICAS: LOOK AHEAD TO WINDSOR

April 26, 2000
Ottawa

125 promenade Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2
Telephone/Téléphone : **613 944 8278** Fax/Télécopieur : **613 944 0687**
www.cfp-pec.gc.ca

103-07577/

REPORT FROM THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE AMERICAS: LOOK AHEAD TO WINDSOR

April 26, 2000
Ottawa

REPORT FROM THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE AMERICAS
LOOK AHEAD TO WINDSOR

April 26, 2000
Ottawa

On April 26, 2000, government officials, NGOs and experts met to share information and ideas about activities leading up to the OAS General Assembly in Windsor (June 4-6, 2000). The roundtable was also a good opportunity to reflect on the development of Canada's Hemisphere policy and public input. Organised by the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, the roundtable participants included the Hon. David Kilgour, M.P., Secretary of State, Latin America and Africa, George Haynal, Assistant Deputy Minister, Americas, Nancy Thede, ICHRDD, Melissa MacLean, Canadian Council for International Cooperation and others.

1. Framing the Discussion

Steven Lee, Chair, welcomed all and outlined the goal of the roundtable: to share information among the government officials and civil society participants.

Minister Kilgour made a brief presentation. He said that the participation of civil society in the development of foreign policy is important. The Hemisphere faces large challenges including the lack of investment, low levels of income, lack of participation in mass education, corruption, marginalised Indigenous Peoples, and gender inequalities.

Canada can play a meaningful part in Latin American development. The 10th anniversary of Canada's membership in the OAS marks a good opportunity to put people first in the Hemisphere and focus on issues such as human security, human rights, Indigenous Peoples, war-affected children and Corporate Social Responsibility. The OAS General Assembly in Windsor is not just a trade meeting. Minister Kilgour was encouraged by the success of the Model OAS General Assembly in Edmonton and expressed his support for multilateralism.

The OAS General Assembly will be a great opportunity for Canadians to learn about the Hemisphere. The presence of civil society in Windsor could also contribute to strengthening the public policy making process. The hope is for a greater cooperation throughout the region and the revitalisation of the Inter-American Indigenous Institute, Minister Kilgour concluded.

George Haynal, Assistant Deputy Minister, Americas, commented on the policy development process leading up to Windsor. He praised the work of the CCFPD in bringing outside ideas into the development of the Hemisphere policy. He was confident about Canada's contribution. Reiterating Minister Kilgour's point, people will be the focus of the Canada's agenda in the Hemisphere.

He emphasised that democracy is key to all Canadian efforts. Human rights are indispensable to embedding democratic values. Inclusion of marginalised groups such as Indigenous Peoples, women, and children is central. The inclusion of small states is also important. Equality and access are other preconditions of a democratic society. Efforts aimed at providing equal access (and rights) to public services including health, education and increasingly also technology, should be stepped-up. The strong commitment to free trade must not be unconditional. The human (social, environmental, and other) consequences of trade and investment flows must be considered.

Canada has already accomplished much at the OAS. *Human security has been imprinted into the consciousness of the institution – a development that can be interpreted as a major ideological break-through.* Focus has shifted from traditional 'high politics' issues to strengthening democracy, human rights, human insecurity (i.e., crime, safety of children) and so on. New actors have also began to enter the scene, including the corporate sector, regional organisations, International Financial Institutions, and more hesitantly, civil society. *There is more meaningful civil society engagement at the OAS than ever before.* The ICHRDD Civil Society Symposium is just one of the public activities around the OAS General Assembly that testify to this trend.

When the Foreign Ministers will be talking about the Quebec City Summit, the Canadian focus will be on these three 'baskets:'

2. Democracy (strengthening)
3. Prosperity (for all)
4. Human potential (equality and access).

George Haynal concluded by saying that despite some challenges, the institution is getting more people-centred and public access/input is growing.

Nancy Thede, ICHRDD, commented on the Civil Society Symposium: Hemispheric Integration and Democracy in the Americas. Hosted by ICHRDD, the symposium will run parallel to the OAS General Assembly in Windsor from June 3 – 5, 2000. *She said that Windsor presented a most favourable opening for the participation of civil society in the Hemisphere.* The idea of the symposium was to take advantage of Canada being a major promoter of civil society engagement in the region. She noted that the goal of the Symposium is to bring critical thinkers to reflect on democracy in the context of integration, as opposed to an all-inclusive civil society forum. She went on to outline the programme of the Symposium, drawing attention to some of

the speakers and events as well as four upcoming background papers (see the attached programme).

5. Synopsis of the Discussion

Participants addressed the dynamics between in-the-tent civil society groups and those without institutional access (i.e., 'street groups'). Some asked how do the recent events in Seattle and Washington impact on the planning for Windsor. How should the Canadian government respond to street protests?

While some were apprehensive about "radical groups" disrupting the OAS General Assembly, others argued that street protest is part of a healthy democracy. "There is no civil and uncivil society," said Nancy Thede. Street protesters do have legitimate reasons for their actions. Some of them believe there are real structural problems which can be only addressed outside of an institutional framework. Their messages should be heard, no matter how radical they may seem to government officials.

People on the streets should not be marginalised. *The Canadian government should develop adequate responses to street pressure (unlike Vancouver during the APEC Summit). Communications strategy aimed at domestic as well as foreign consumption should include messages such as, for instance: Democracy is not always tidy, it involves disagreement as much as compromise. Dissent is legitimate. Public voices are valuable from inside-the-tent and from the street.*

Allan Torbitt, AFN, said that the AFN, together with other Indigenous organisations throughout the Hemisphere has been trying to get inside of the tent of the Inter-American system. Indigenous Peoples have a unique window into the Inter-American system. *A working group has been established to work on drafting a Declaration on Indigenous Peoples. Efforts are aimed at constructing a mechanism which would allow an almost equal participation of Indigenous People in the system.*

Indigenous Peoples issues should not be ghettoised but addressed along with other concerns including human rights, sustainable development, trade liberalisation, narco-trafficking, small arms and others. The AFN vision and strategy go beyond the Windsor General Assembly and the Quebec City Summit. It involves the OAS members states individually as well as a range of Indigenous Peoples organisations. The Canadian government has been supportive and shows commitment to Indigenous Peoples issues.

Another unique window of opportunity for Indigenous People in the Hemisphere is the Inter-American Indigenous Institute. Established 60 years ago by the OAS member states, the Institute's activities have reflected practices of many Latin American governments toward Indigenous Peoples in the mid 1940ties (i.e., treating Indigenous Peoples in the region as a "problem"). *The AFN aims to help the Canadian government to develop a strategy to reform and*

revitalise the Institute. Minister Axworthy signalled his interest to pursue this issue. The Institute could be a useful tool for Indigenous Peoples inclusion and participation, however, it requires a radical reform. Without it, the institution should be scrapped all together.

Indigenous Peoples are engaged. Recently the AFN co-hosted a roundtable in Winnipeg with the CCFPD which included Indigenous Peoples leaders and representatives from the Hemisphere, government officials, business, and academics (March 22-23, 2000). Paul Chartrand prepared a discussion paper on Corporate Social Responsibility. There will likely not be a large Indigenous Peoples presence at Windsor due to lack of resources. The AFN will be present as well as other Indigenous groups from Canada. *Plans are underway to stage a large Indigenous Leaders of the Hemisphere Conference later this year aimed at producing a consensual statement for the Quebec City Summit.* Canadian initiatives on Indigenous Peoples issues are ahead of Latin America and the United States, in many instances, concluded Allan Torbitt. There is an expectation that Canada will continue leading in this area.

Some participants raised the challenge of shifting the focus of OAS member states from national sovereignty to Human Security issues. George Haynal said that while acceptance of the concept varies, Canada will continue to promote it. A step forward was the unprecedented cooperation of some of the OAS member states in trying to prevent illegal drug trafficking. They agreed to develop a mechanism that requires polling of national sovereignly. Such a development was highly unlikely even five years ago. An new understanding of sovereignty, based on the security of citizens and legitimate governance is developing. Moreover, there are extensive trans-boundary civil society networks, including labour unions, specific issue groups (i.e., bio-technology, Social Corporate Responsibility, etc.), NGOs, and others. The internet and other new telecommunications technologies also contribute to the erosion of the traditional concept of state sovereignty and the emergence of diverse e-communities.

Others pointed out that the years of oppression in Latin America may have seriously undermined the capacity of civil society to organise for years to come. Strengthening democracy in the region will take more than building institutions and improving governance. The relative weakness of Southern NGOs requires commitment on the part of the Northern governments and Northern NGOs to build capacity of the Latin American peoples to participate. Interests of those located in the poor South may not necessarily correspond with rich Northern NGOs, posing challenges for a united civil society forum. Michael Jay, CIDA, told the participants that CIDA is trying to build capacity of Southern NGOs, encourages networking, and includes small Carribean countries.

Laura MacDonald, Carleton University, drew attention to the tension within the Human Security framework between individual and collective rights. She asked how are the individual aspects of Human Security reconciled with communitarian notions and pointed out that an excessive reliance on the former may facilitate special interests and free markets at the expense of community development. Steve Lee, Chair, pointed to the many collective aspects of Human

Security, including focus on Indigenous Peoples, children, and other, often marginalised, groups.

Corporate Social Responsibility within the Hemisphere was also discussed. Canada is ready to initiate dialogue at the OAS on Corporate Social Responsibility, said Michael Brock, Inter-American Division. There will be confusion and different views coming from some Latin American countries. Many have just started to privatise and only recently began including non-state actors in political processes. Nevertheless, there is a willingness to tackle the issue. Some progress has been already made by the Working Group on Properties and Ethics. Canada is sending the message to its OAS counterparts that good governance is not only about good government but that private actors, including the Corporate sector, have a role to play.

The government officials stressed that the OAS does not legislate, but provides an equal playing field and facilitates debates. They also reiterated that the OAS is not a trade body, it largely concentrates on technical assistance, including scientific cooperation, and has a large cultural component. Nobina Robinson, FOCAL, said that the media and the public are not aware of the rich non-trade agenda of the OAS. There is a need to better communicate the issues the OAS is involved in (rather than to focus on institutional processes).

In conclusion, Steve Lee, Chair, said that the OAS General Assembly and the Quebec City Summit are an opportunity to show Canadian leadership on issues including Indigenous Peoples, Corporate Social Responsibility, small arms, war-affected children and others. He emphasised the need to communicate better the different roles civil society has in a democracy and drew attention to the opportunity for broad civil society engagement.

Canadian Centre
For Foreign Policy
Development

Centre canadien
pour le développement
de la politique étrangère

125 promenade Sussex Drive Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

PRELIMINARY AGENDA
ROUNDTABLE ON THE AMERICAS:
LOOK AHEAD TO WINDSOR

April 26, 2000 (9:00-13:00)

Ottawa
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
125 Sussex Drive, A – 9 Boardroom

9:00	Coffee and light breakfast
9:15	Welcome and Opening Remarks **Steve Lee, Chair**
	An Overview: Canada and the Hemisphere **Hon. David Kilgour, M.P., Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)**
9:40-10:00	*Look Ahead to Windsor* **George Haynal, Assistant Deputy Minister, Americas**
10:00-11:00	Discussion
11:00-11:15	*Update on the Civil Society Symposium hosted by the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (June 3 to 5, 2000)* **Nancy Thede, ICHRDD**
	Coffee available
11:15-12:00	Discussion
12:00	Lunch/Informal Discussions
13:00	Closing Remarks

Tel./Tel. : (613) 944-8278 Fax/Télécopieur : (613) 944-0687

Canadian Centre
For Foreign Policy
Development

Centre canadien
pour le développement
de la politique étrangère

125 promenade Sussex Drive Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

PRELIMINARY LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
ROUNDTABLE ON THE AMERICAS:
LOOK AHEAD TO WINDSOR

April 26, 2000 (9:00-13:00)

Ottawa
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
125 Sussex Drive

Nancy Thede
International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development

Nobina Robinson
FOCAL

Martin Roy
FOCAL

Stacey Wilson-Forsberg
FOCAL

David Strawczynski
AUCC

Cynthia Morel
UNESCO

Elizabeth Barot
UNESCO

Melissa MacLean
Canadian Council for International Cooperation

Arch Ritter
Carleton University

Laura Macdonald
Carleton University

Michael Bessett
Carleton University

Diane Richler
Canadian Association for Community Living

Allan Torbitt
Assembly of First Nations

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade:

Hon. David Kilgour
Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa)

John Clarke
Office of Minister Axworthy

George Haynal
Assistant Deputy Minister, Americas

Tel./Tél.: (613) 944-8278 Fax/Télécopieur: (613) 944-0687
www.cfp-pecc.ca

Michael Brock
Mexico and Inter-American Division

CIDA

Michael Jay
Americas Branch

Leeann Mc Kechnie
Inter-American Program & Summit of the
Americas Task Force

THE TORONTO STAR
Monday, May 29, 2000

Canada can play lead role in OAS

BY STEVE LEE

There will be many changes at play when 35 foreign ministers, their officials, journalists and protesters gather in Windsor next week for the Organization of American States (OAS) general assembly.

Changes include protests against globalization and a growing role for citizens and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in international affairs. Change also includes a larger role for Canada in the hemisphere and a need to link trade interests with other public-policy objectives.

Canada should seize this moment as an opportunity.

Street protests at recent international meetings have drawn attention to three divisions in the international system.

There is a divide between industrialized northern societies and the southern poor over participation in the global economy, including prosperity and access to education, information and new technology. With falling aid budgets and a deepening wealth gap, northern societies are seen as either unwilling or incapable of addressing this divide.

There is a second divide between many governments of the north and governments of the south over the legitimacy and role of NGOs in public affairs and international relations. Some southern governments see environmentalists and labour as self-interested agents attempting to maintain the division of wealth between north and south. Or, as Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo said, "trying to save the developing world from development."

The third divide is within northern societies like Canada and the United States, a gap between those who prosper in the new global economy and those who are left out, marginalized or just overwhelmingly anxious about their futures and the fate of their communities.

In preparation for Windsor, Canadians already have played an important role in helping to shape Canada's policy response to these divisions and in helping to shape the conference agenda. At Windsor, Canada will promote human security in the hemisphere, "putting people first" by promoting attention to democracy, human rights and indigenous peoples and creating conditions for prosperity for all.

This is a remarkable moment of Canadian leadership. Canada has brought a focus to people and to human security in hemispheric affairs.

"The major accomplishment for Canada is that the OAS as an institution accepts the human security agenda," according to George Haynal, assistant deputy minister for the Americas. After 10 years with Canada as a member, "It's an ideological breakthrough."

REUTERS FILE PHOTO

SEATTLE COMING TO WINDSOR? Protests are possible when the Organization of American States meets in Windsor next week. Street demonstrations and arrests, above, were a feature of the World Trade Organization meeting last year in Seattle.

In round tables organized by the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development across the country, Canadians have provided advice and policy ideas.

"The number of elections is no longer considered a sufficient indicator of a consolidated democracy," said Max Cameron of the University of British Columbia. "Elections do not necessarily produce democratic leaders. On the contrary, they may lead to cementing an authoritarian regime. While institutions and procedures are important, more attention should be paid to what goes on inside them and what they produce."

"Economic, social and cultural rights are as important for any democracy as political rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of association and electoral rights," said Judith Weiss of Mount Alison University in Halifax.

At a round table in Ottawa, participants emphasized the need for corporate codes of conduct within trade agreements.

Sheila Katz of the Canadian Labour Congress said that workers in Latin America have heard the promises of prosperity from free trade. However, the spread of free markets often has led to enhanced social and economic inequality, stagnant wages and unemployment.

During the Winnipeg round table, First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine and other indigenous leaders met with Marc Lortie, the Prime Minister's special representative for the 2001 Summit of the Americas in Quebec city. This round table has led to plans for a Canada-sponsored gathering of indigenous leaders throughout the hemisphere.

Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy is proposing a renewal of the Inter-American Indian Institute. "Our hope is to see a proposal at Windsor for a renewed institute that could help respond to the real needs of indigenous peoples."

From the 10 round tables some common themes emerged:

- Democracy is fundamental to everything and needs to be strengthened in some countries.
- Human rights are essential in building viable democracies.
- Democracy in the region must include women, children, indigenous peoples and small states.
- Citizens throughout the Americas need access to services such as education, health and the digital world of new technologies.
- Canada should take the lead in ensuring that the free trade negotiation process is open, transparent, and politically accountable to maximize the involvement of civil society and contribute to increased democratization in the hemisphere.

This partnership in shaping the agenda for Windsor and identifying issues for Canadian foreign-policy attention is key to Canada's success as the hemispheric host in the coming year and can be a model for others.

"We ignore civil society at our peril," Axworthy says. That the minister and Canadians share common concerns is no accident. They are born of the same Canadian values that fuelled discussion at the Americas round tables.

As official and informal events unfold in Windsor, it will be useful to keep in mind the important leadership role Canada plays, including leadership involving citizens in public policy.

It may be useful to remember as well that the divisions and the forces of change around globalization, trade policy and citizen participation will continue to take shape beyond Windsor.

Steve Lee is the executive director of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development which helps Canadians and others outside governments to contribute to foreign policy development. The OAS meeting in Windsor runs from June 4 to 6.